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PRESIDENT FORD ON NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

ANNCR: VOA NEWS ANALYST RONALD J. DUNLAVEY DISCUSSES PRESIDENT FORD'S NEW PROPOSALS FOR HALTING THE MISUSE OF NUCLEAR MATERIAL:

VOICE: (OPT) MR. FORD MIGHT HAVE CALLED HIS STATEMENT THURSDAY "THE PROBLEM OF PLUTONIUM." HE SUMMED UP THAT PROBLEM IN THESE WORDS AT THE VERY BEGINNING. "ON THE ONE HAND, NUCLEAR ENERGY REPRESENTS ONE OF THE BEST HOPES FOR SATISFYING THE RISING WORLD DEMAND FOR ENERGY. ON THE OTHER HAND, NUCLEAR FUEL, AS IT PRODUCES POWER, ALSO PRODUCES PLUTONIUM. THE PLUTONIUM CAN BE RECYCLED AND USED TO GENERATE ADDITIONAL NUCLEAR POWER. UNFORTUNTELY---AND THIS IS THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM---THE SAME PLUTONIUM CAN, WHEN CHEMICALL SEPARATED, ALSO BE USED TO MAKE NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES." ADDED MR. FORD: "DEVELOPING THE ENORMOUS BENEFITS OF NUCLEAR ENERGY WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY DEVELOPING THE MEANS TO PREVENT PROLIFERATION IS ONE OF THE MAJOR CHALLENGES FACING ALL NATIONS OF THE WORLD TODAY." (END OPT.)

IN THE PAST, THE UNITED STATES---AS THE WORLD'S LEADING NUCLEAR POWER---HAS TAKEN STEPS TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM OF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION. NOW, HOWEVER, MR. FORD PROPOSES NEW INITIATIVES. HE WANTS THE UNITED STATES ITSELF TO CALL A MORATORIUM ON ITS OWN POLICY OF ENCOURAGING THE COMMERCIAL REPROCESSING OF NUCLEAR FUEL --- AT LEAST UNTIL UNCERTAINTIES ARE RESOLVED. HE CALLS FOR A MORATORIUM OF THREE YEARS ON THE TRANSFER OF NUCLEAR REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGY BY ALL NUCLEAR POWERS---UNTIL BOTH SUPPLIERS AND CONSUMERS CAN WORK OUT METHODS TO MEET NUCLEAR NEEDS WITH MINIMUM RISK. HE URGES NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS TO PROVIDE CONSUMERS WITH FUEL SERVICES INSTEAD OF SENSITIVE TECHNOLOGY OR FACILITIES---AND POINTS OUT THAT CONSUMER NATIONS ACCEPTING ANTI-PROLIFERATION RESTRAINTS

HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT RELIABLE FUEL SUPPLIES. MR. FORD CALLS ON THE UNITED STATES TO STRENGTHEN ITS OWN ROLE AS A RELIABLE SUPPLIER OF NUCLEAR REACTORS AND THE FUEL TO RUN THEM---AND FOR THIS REASON HE PROPOSES AN EXPANSION OF THE URANIUM-PRODUCING CAPACITY OF THE UNITED STATES. HE ALSO SUGGESTS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERNATIONAL CONTROLS AGAINST PROLIFERATION, INCLUDING A NEW INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FOR THE SAFE STORAGE OF "CIVIL" PLUTONIUM AND SPENT REACTOR FUEL. AND HE WANTS THE UNITED STATES TO IMPROVE ITS NUCLEAR EXPORT POLICIES SO THAT IT CAN BETTER FULFILL ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO --- AS MR. FORD PUT IT---"SHARE THE BENEFITS OF NUCLEAR ENERGY WITH OTHER COUNTRIES."

(OPT) THIS LAST POINT --- PLUS MR. FORD'S INSISTENCE THAT THE U.S. BE A RELIABLE SUPPLIER---IS ONE OF THE MOST STRIKING ASPECTS OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAM: THAT IS, RECOGNITION THAT MANY COUNTRIES URGENTLY NEED ENERGY FROM NUCLEAR SOURCES, AND THAT THE NUCLEAR POWERS MUST SUPPLY IT. LINKED WITH THIS IS RECOGNITION ALSO THAT PROLIFERATION IS AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM, AND THAT CONTROL OVER THE AVAILABILITY OF PLUTONIUM CANNOT BE EFFECTIVELY ESTABLISHED BY ANY ONE COUNTRY, NOT EVEN THE UNITED STATES. THE EMPHASIS THROUGHOUT IS ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION. IN FACT, THE UNITED STATES CONSULTED WITH THE OTHER NUCLEAR POWERS, INCLUDING THE SOVIET UNION, ABOUT THE PROPOSALS BEFORE THEY WERE MADE PUBLIC HERE.(END OPT.)

IT WAS PERHAPS INEVITABLE THAT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SHOULD BE ASKED IF THE FORD PROPOSALS HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH NEXT TUESDAY'S ELECTION. THEIR RESPONSE WAS THAT THE PROPOSALS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ELECTION, THAT THEY REPRESENTED A BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS AND HAD BEEN IN PREPARATION FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. IT IS A FACT, HOWEVER, THAT MR. CARTER HAS BEEN CRITICAL OF THE FORD

ADMINISTRATION'S NUCLEAR POLICIES, AND SOME OBSERVERS SEE THURSDAY'S PROPOSALS AS A RESPONSE TO THAT CRITICISM. MR. CARTER ALSO IS CRITICAL OF THE NEW PROPOSALS, DESCRIBING THEM AS -- IN HIS WORDS---"A CAMPAIGN-INSPIRED ATTEMPT TO CORRECT THE TIMID RECORD OF THE PAST."

NO DOUBT IN THE DAYS AHEAD THE FORD PROPOSALS WILL BE COMPARED WITH THOSE ADVANCED EARLIER BY MR. CARTER. ONE THING THAT IS OBVIOUS HOWEVER, IS THAT BOTH CANDIDATES APPEAR TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE. AND FOR THIS REASON---REGARDLESS OF WHO WINS THE ELECTION---WE MAY ASSUME THAT THE NEXT ADMINISTRATI WILL BE COMMITTED TO NEW AND BETTER WAYS OF INCREASING THE WORLD'S NUCLEAR ENERGY SUPPLY WHILE PROTECTING IT FROM THE DANGER OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROLIFERATION.

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